

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.

I am concerned about plans by the Sinclair Broadcast Group, Inc. to force their member stations to preempt regular programming and air one-sided program "Stolen Honor" two weeks before the presidential election. "Stolen Honor" is a biased presentation that aims to smear the reputation of Senator Kerry. Sinclair and its stations use the public airwaves for free, and they are obligated by federal law to serve the public interest. The airing of this smear piece hardly qualifies in that regard, and illustrates the problems that have come to dominate the U.S. media scene with the consolidation of broadcast rights in the hands of the few, rich, powerful media conglomerates like Sinclair. Tougher federal controls on media ownership are needed to prevent the suffocation of honest, free journalism and democracy that is so aptly illustrated by Sinclair's shamelessly political use of the nation's airwaves.